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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 001234

SIPDIS

STATE PASS TO DOL/ILAB FOR TINA MCCARTER AND DRL/IL FOR LAUREN HOLT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: UPDATE OF WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR INFORMATION

REF: SECSTATE 143552

¶1. Embassy Manama's response to reftel follows. Answers are keyed to reftel questions.

¶2. A. The Labor Law for the Private Sector of 1976, as amended, establishes 14 years as the absolute minimum age for employment in Bahrain. Both national and foreign workers are covered by this law, although children working as domestics and in agriculture and children who work in family-owned enterprises that they will inherit are exempted from coverage of most of the law. The Ministry of Labor grants and reviews work permits for foreigners pursuant to Article 3, and such permits may only be granted to persons 18 years of age and older. The Labor Law for the Private Sector establishes special requirements for the employment of children ages 14 to 16. Children ages 14 to 16 may not be employed in hazardous conditions; may not work overtime or at night; may not work on a piecework basis; and in any case may not work for more than 4 consecutive hours or more than 6 hours per day. They must also be granted annual leave of not less than one full month, which they are not allowed to waive. Under the Education Act, which was ratified by the King on August 15, 2005 school is compulsory for children ages 6 to 15.

¶3. A (continued). A subsidiary order enacted under the provisions of the Labor Law for the Private Sector prohibits children under the age of 16 from working in more than 25 hazardous professions, and sets a maximum allowable weight of 20 kilograms for children ages 14 to 16 to carry as part of their work. In addition, such children must obtain authorization from the Ministry of Labor and undergo a medical examination prior to their admission to employment. Forced or compulsory labor is also prohibited by the Constitution, and the government effectively enforces this prohibition. There is no compulsory military service in Bahrain. The minimum age for enlistment in the Bahrain Defense Force is 15 years.

¶4. A (continued). Prostitution is illegal under the Penal Code, and encouraging a child less than 18 years of age to enter into prostitution is punishable by two to 10 years of imprisonment depending on the age of the victim. Bahraini authorities sporadically enforce the laws against prostitution. Child prostitution, procuring, and pimping is unheard of. Violators are dealt with harshly and can be imprisoned or, if the violator is a non-citizen, deported. In some cases, authorities reportedly return children arrested for illicit activities to their families rather than prosecute them, especially for the first offense. Bahraini law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in children, but there are several statutes under which traffickers can be prosecuted, including laws on kidnapping, forced prostitution, and coercion.

¶5. A (continued). Bahrain ratified ILO Convention 182 on March 23, 2001. In December 2003, the National Assembly approved the UN Convention on International Organized Crime and the optional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

¶6. B. The Ministry of Labor is responsible for implementing and enforcing child labor laws and regulations. The Labor Law for the Private Sector provides for the inspection of workplaces and for legal sanctions against employers found in violation of child labor laws. Violators of the law or its implementing regulations are subject to fines of not less than 50 dinars (USD 133) and not more than 200 dinars (USD 530) for each occurrence and each worker. The same penalties apply to any person acting as a guardian of a juvenile who permits his or her employment in violation of the provisions. The Ministry of Labor currently employs 17 labor inspectors and is in the process of hiring 30 more. The inspectors effectively enforce child labor legislation in the industrial sector; however, child labor outside the industrial sector is monitored less effectively.

¶7. C. The Constitution provides for free and compulsory education at the primary levels. The majority of school-aged children attend school. In 2001, 98.4 percent of boys were

enrolled in basic education and 97.5 percent of girls were enrolled. The rules regarding compulsory education were not always enforced, but under the new Education Act parents who fail to send their children to school will face prosecution. The government provides for school equipment, supplies, and transportation and establishes separate schools for boys and girls at all levels. In addition, the Government is working to improve educational quality by hiring additional teachers, reducing class sizes, and offering teacher training and professional development courses for instructors. The government has also established educational and vocational training programs for school dropouts and has taken other measures to encourage regular school attendance.

18. D. The government has developed a national plan of action to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

19. E. Statistics on the number of working children under age 14 in Bahrain are unavailable, but reports indicate that child labor is not widespread. Children reportedly work in family businesses. In addition, small numbers of children perform odd jobs in the Manama Central Market.

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